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ABSTRACT

This practicum paper sets out a leadership development action plan (LDAP) at Mount Vernon Nazarene College (MVNC) in Ohio intended to help the director of retention and academic services in efforts to improve preparedness and readiness levels of prospective students at the school, a church-related coeducational college of arts and science. The plan was developed to address complaints of student deficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematics skills, scientific knowledge, classical literature background, commitment to out-of-class study, and general study skills such as notetaking and time management. Key points of the LDAP included: (1) challenging the process; (2) inspiring a shared vision; (3) enabling others to act; (4) modeling the way; and (5) encouraging the heart. Emphasis was also on raising academic expectation levels of prospective students and improving retention by encouraging high school students to enroll in proper high school college preparatory courses. Individual sections of the report consider: the project' background, the process of plan development, the literature review, methodology and procedures, results, and evaluation. Appendixes include a list of suggested components for a leadership development action plan; a sample inquiry letter; a list of validators; a list of suggested plan revisions; and the final leadership development action plan. (Contains 50 references.) (CH)

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A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVING THE PREPAREDNESS LEVELS OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AT MVNC

Leadership

Ronald Bolender

Mount Vernon Nazarene College

A Practicum Report presented to Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Abstract of a Practicum Report presented to Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVING THE PREPAREDNESS LEVELS OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AT MVNC

by

Ronald Bolender

February, 1994

A leadership development action plan (LDAP) for improving the preparedness and readiness levels of prospective students for the academic experience at Mount Vernon Nazarene College (MVNC) was developed as a result of this study. The position of director of retention and academic support services was the focus of leadership development. The research question for this study was: What is an appropriate LDAP to help the director of retention and academic support services deal with the following tasks: (a) raising the

academic expectation level of prospective students (readiness); and (b) orienting prospective students to enroll in the proper high school college preparatory courses (preparedness)? The LDAP was developed based upon a review of leadership, recruitment, and retention literature. The LDAP was validated (internally and externally) by professionals with knowledge in the following areas: (a) admissions process; (b) college and high school collaborative efforts to better prepare students for the college academic experience; and (c) enhancing the college freshman year with a integrated year long orientation and retention program. A revised LDAP document was reviewed by a final evaluator who has knowledge in the field of leadership. A recommendation was made to distribute copies of the LDAP document to the following individuals at MVNC: (a) president; (b) administrative cabinet; and (c) board of trustees. It was also recommended that the director of retention and academic support services implement the LDAP as developed in this study.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

Mount Vernon Nazarene College (MVNC) is a church related coeducational college of arts and sciences that is sponsored and supported by the East Central Educational Region of the Church of the Nazarene including: (a) Ohio; (b) eastern Kentucky; and (c) West Virginia. It has a student body of over 1200 and is located in a small rural county in central Ohio. At least one third of the student body come from families where parents are not college educated and at least 40% of the student body come from a rural or Appalachian county.

A common complaint voiced by MVNC faculty is that students are not prepared adequately for college level work upon entering MVNC including deficiencies in the following: (a) reading skills; (b) writing skills (especially in the formal research style); (c) mathematics skills; (d) science knowledge; (e) classical literature background; (f) commitment to assume responsibility for out of class study load; and (g) general study skills (such as notetaking and time

management). It should be noted that this is not a new concern for college personnel to express. President Johnson of Kings College (Columbia) stated the same problem existed at his prestigious institution back in 1759 (Morrison, 1936).

The director of retention and academic support services interviews around 70 to 80 first-time freshmen at MVNC each year. Each student is asked to quantify how many hours were spent per night studying for college preparatory courses during the junior and senior years of high school. A common response is one hour or less per weeknight. The response is similar for students of all academic levels. Many students with a respectable high school rank and grade point average (GPA) find it difficult to adjust to college academic life. The college preparatory program in high school for these students did not develop a realistic expectation of college work.

The average American College Test (ACT) Composite score has been increasing at MVNC for the last few years. Students enrolled at MVNC represent a good balance of the following: (a) high ability students (ACT Composite scores of 27 and better); (b) average

ability students (ACT Composite scores between 18 through 26); and (c) at-risk students (ACT Composite scores of less than 18). MVNC attempts to serve students at various levels of academic ability giving each an opportunity to pursue a college education.

Faculty complaints about the academic quality of entering freshmen tend to create tension between faculty and the enrollment services division (which houses the admissions office). Even though the average ACT Composite score has been rising, it is also apparent that a lack of readiness and preparedness for college work is also prevalent. Faculty complain that the enrollment services division is careless about the type of students recruited for MVNC.

The interviews of first-time freshmen conducted by the director of retention and academic support services reveal that many high school guidance counselors do not provide assistance to students in planning for college. Several students have never conversed with their high school guidance counselor regarding recommended college preparatory courses. Due to this lack of personal advising, several interviewees did not know what courses to take in order to be prepared adequately for

college. This, coupled with such a high number of students who come from homes where parents are not college educated, indicates that many first-time freshmen enter MVNC without appropriate expectations as to the academic demands of college. "Too often we forget that students come to us with uninformed expectations about college learning and college life--another factor contributing to attrition" (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 68).

The purpose of this study was to create a leadership development action plan (LDAP) to cultivate MVNC's current prospective pool of students into more adequately prepared students. The majority are from Nazarene churches located within the East Central Educational Region including: (a) Ohio; (b) eastern Kentucky; and (c) West Virginia. This LDAP will focus on the tasks of (a) raising the academic expectation level of prospective students (readiness) and (b) orienting prospective students to enroll in the proper college preparatory courses (preparedness).

One response to this problem would be to expand recruiting efforts to include a greater portion of students who are already better prepared for college.

However, with competition for top high school students in the general population increasing, this response may be too costly. An alternative solution would be to cultivate MVNC's current pool of high school age prospects into college bound students who are better prepared academically for college. This alternative solution allows MVNC to (a) focus on students from the East Central Educational Region and (b) to develop a recruitment strategy with less expenditure of scarce resources.

This study related directly to the Leadership seminar conducted by Nova University, specifically the sections pertaining to contemporary theories of leadership (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Kotter, 1990) and participatory decision making (Vroom & Jago, 1988). The LDAP design used in this study is based on a model used in the Leadership seminar (Haugerud, Little, & Parks, 1993).

Research Question

What is an appropriate LDAP to help the director of retention and academic support services deal with the following tasks: (a) raising the academic expectation level of prospective students (readiness); and (b)

orienting prospective students to enroll in the proper high school college preparatory courses (preparedness)? The development of an LDAP for the director of retention and academic support services was the focus of this study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many sources related to: (a) leadership and (b) recruitment and retention were reviewed. Primary sources for leadership were textbooks and recommended reading books listed in the study guide for the Leadership seminar (Haugerud, Little, & Parks, 1993). Primary sources for recruitment and retention were from appropriate: (a) ERIC documents; (b) journals; and (c) other professional publications.

Leadership

Leadership is defined as ". . . a process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas" (Kotter, 1990, p. 3). An example of mobilization of followers toward a vision is Bill Gates (president and chief executive officer) as leader at Microsoft (a software development corporation). Deutschman (1992) states that Gates' compelling vision is the driving force at Microsoft. Gate's vision is to ultimately transform how people obtain information. This vision gives direction to the organization. The day to day operations at Microsoft plus its new product developments mobilize its employees to move toward that

vision. It would have been easy for Gates to settle for the early success of MS DOS and to revert into a management only mode. The growth of Microsoft is following the direction that Gates' vision is pointing toward. This is a good illustration of the subtle difference between leadership and management.

Management is involved in: (a) planning and budgeting; (b) organizing and staffing; and (c) controlling and problem solving. The purpose of management is to give consistency and order to an organization. Leadership produces movement by three important subprocesses: (a) establishing direction; (b) aligning people; and (c) motivating and inspiring (Kotter, 1990). The purpose of leadership is to produce change. The three subprocesses of leadership were the focus of this study.

Establishing direction. "Leadership produces change" (Kotter, 1990, p. 35). Direction setting as opposed to the development of detailed plans is the desired outcome of leadership. Direction setting is translated into strategy development. Strategies possess a level of uncertainty. Management gives

consistency and order to an organization. Strategies give direction rather than order.

The process of producing change is not the same as developing a long-range plan. The process of producing change focuses on direction setting. Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green (1982) state that true strategy development does not follow traditional long-range planning formulas. It is proper to establish direction (vision or goals), but once the direction has been set it must be loose enough to adjust to external and internal environmental changes.

Direction setting involves the rational process of gathering information (Kotter, 1990). Bean (1990) states that enrollment management (academic support, recruitment, and retention are under the enrollment management administrative unit at MVNC) needs to always be scanning the external environment to find information about external threats and opportunities. The process of strategy development uses the gathered information to give direction to the organization in response to external threats or opportunities. Direction setting does not involve developing a detailed master plan that specifically states what will

be done over the next five years. Changes in the external environment seldom allow for that level of certainty about the future (Bean, 1990; Kemerer, Baldridge, & Green, 1982).

Aligning people. Aligning followers toward a new direction is only successful when there is effective communication (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kotter, 1990). Communication is a two way process. Based upon the information gathered concerning the external environment (as well as the condition of the internal environment), the direction may be developed by the leader or both the leader and followers (co-workers). Either process requires a great deal of communication between leader and followers as well as among followers.

Followers need to see on a regular basis that the leader really believes in the direction that has been set. Leaders must lead by example. ". . . behavior creates attitudes, not the reverse" (McCall, 1989, p. 117). Kotter (1990) states that actions speak louder than words, known as "'walking the talk'" (p. 57). Followers model the actions of the leader (Nielsen, 1993). Kouzes and Posner (1993) state that followers

need leaders who will ". . . do what we say we will do -- DWWSWWD" (p.47). This produces the credibility level that a leader has with the followers (Kotter, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 1993).

Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) list six categories of leadership theories: (a) trait; (b) power and influence; (c) behavioral; (d) contingency; (e) cultural and symbolic; and (f) cognitive. The contingency category is made up of theories that allow for leadership style to be influenced by both the external environment and the nature of the task at hand. Decision participation is one model listed under the contingency category. The level of decision making involvement of the followers varies based upon the task at hand. The leader needs to select the correct level of decision making involvement. Communication is an important key for to levels of decision making involvement, but the level of participation in the final decision may vary.

Participatory decision making management is one example listed under the decision participation model (Vroom & Jago, 1988). Participatory decision making management involves performing an analysis to determine

the best decision making method to be used in a given situation. There are three categories of decision making methods: (a) autocratic; (b) consultative; and (c) group. These methods blend various levels of information gathering and participation.

The autocratic method allows the leader to make the decision without direct participation from the followers. With the consultative method, followers are asked to provide input regarding a situation. The leader ultimately makes the decision which may or may not be in agreement with the consensus of the followers. The group method allows the followers to make the decision (which may or may not agree with the leader's viewpoint). Under this method the group decision is implemented. The goal is to select a method that produces the most effective decision for the organization. An effective decision is determined by: (a) time constraints; (b) responsiveness to customer service issues; (c) allocation of scarce resources; and (d) interest level of employees in the problem at hand.

Vroom and Jago (1988) do not separate leadership from management in their presentation of participatory

management. In order to bring about good decisions, a culture must be developed within an organization that allows freedom to choose the best decision making method. In addition, individuals must be trained and developed to lead or manage that process.

If time allows, the group and consultative decision making methods are best for aligning followers. With the consultative method followers may not agree with the final decision, but are asked to give information that will help in making a decision. Followers have had an opportunity to share information they felt was important and in that way have some ownership of the decision.

Vroom and Jago (1988) and Kotter (1990) agree that a culture needs to exist within an organization that allows individuals to develop as participatory decision makers. The skill of making effective decisions can be learned. Using case studies as part of the training, individuals recommend the best decision making methods for various situations. The goal is to help managers and leaders use participatory decision making techniques as often as possible, realizing however that no one method is best for every situation.

Participatory decision making goes beyond the holding of group meetings. The specific purpose of each meeting must be clearly communicated to the followers (preferably prior to the meeting). In addition, the followers must view the purpose of the meetings as valuable enough to spend their time in participation (Haugerud, 1992, 1993a).

Motivating and inspiring. Leaders must inspire and motivate followers to pass through obstacles and roadblocks that invariably lie in the path of change. "Motivation over time requires first, that visions and strategies be communicated on a continuous basis, not just once or occasionally" (Kotter, 1990, p. 72).

Gardner (1989) states that a leader needs to unlock and redirect existing motives in followers. Creating motivation out of thin air is a difficult task. It is easier to find and align existing motivations in followers that relate to the vision. Empowering followers to act upon existing motivations allows for followers to become leaders in their own (although sometimes limited) domains (Cronin, 1989). Followers who are empowered to make a difference in the organization will: (a) feel more responsible for the

outcomes of the organization; (b) show more initiative in helping the organization reach its goals; and (c) have greater enjoyment with their participation in the origination (Wellins, Byham, & Wilson, 1991).

Motivation and inspiration passed on from leader to followers are built upon the: (a) level of readiness for change among followers (Haugerud, 1993c) and (b) networking and strength of relationships between leader and followers (Haugerud, 1993b; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Followers must be ready for change. The level of preparation through participatory decision making management and effectiveness of communicating the vision can determine the level of readiness among followers for change. Communication is enhanced by the use of relational networks. Kotter (1990) uses the term thick informal networks. This type of network often does not follow traditional organizational charts. It allows the leader to communicate with any stakeholder that could help or hinder the implementation of the vision. Effective communication creates cooperation among stakeholders toward reaching the vision. This process can alleviate some of the

competitiveness among administrative units that is a usual byproduct of the organizational chart design.

Recruitment and Retention

Braxton (1990) states that high school students go through a three stage decision making process prior to entering a particular post secondary institution: (a) predisposition; (b) search; and (c) choice. The predisposition stage is where a student decides if formal education will be continued beyond high school. If a preliminary decision is made to attend college, perceptions are developed regarding: (a) the necessary number and type of college preparatory courses that need to be completed in high school (preparedness) and (b) the expectation level of the amount of study required in college (readiness). This stage is traditionally considered beyond the scope of enrollment managers and therefore usually receives little attention.

The predisposition stage is ignored by most enrollment managers due to use of the sales-oriented approach to recruitment (Ihlanfeldt, 1985). This approach views recruitment (and eventual matriculation) of students as a sales process that usually begins

during the junior year in high school. It uses traditional recruitment activities: (a) college fairs; (b) high school visits; and (c) mass mailing campaigns to selected students listed in the databases of college entrance test centers. Little effort is made to help students develop a readiness or preparedness for college academic life.

The management-oriented approach (Ihlanfeldt, 1985) begins the recruitment process as early as the ninth grade. This allows time for the institution to orient prospective students toward the proper academic expectations of the institution. A better fit of prospects' expectations and institutional realities is a result of this effort. Prospects have enough time to modify behavior while in high school in order to be ready for the academic expectations of the institution or to look elsewhere. The management-oriented approach allows the institution to deal with a variety of academic readiness and preparedness issues including: (a) academically underprepared; (b) transition to college learning; (c) aspirations toward attending college (Hulick & Higginson, 1989; McCartan, 1988;

Moore & Carpenter, 1985; Staff, 1993a, Fall; Tierney & Branch, 1992).

Much attention and research have been focused on developing specific orientation programs to help college freshmen make the academic and social transitions from high school to college. This is often conducted as a last minute effort to orient students toward the academic expectations of the institution. Most of these orientation programs take place for a day or two during the summer preceding the freshman year or just prior to fall registration.

Many institutions have developed semester long orientation programs to continue the process begun at the brief pre-matriculation programs. From an academic perspective, the purpose of these programs is to help first-time freshmen realize the expected level of study time required for most students to succeed academically (readiness) and to determine, by various assessments, the current academic preparedness of students (Fox, Zakely, Morris, & Jundt, 1993; Smith & Brackin, 1993). Some of these programs include a component designed to help parents better understand the transition from high school to college academic life and the rationale

behind certain required courses (Harmon & Rhatigan, 1990; Hinni & Eison, 1990).

The bridge program is a type of pre-matriculation program that is more intrusive than the brief day or two orientation sessions. This program is often designed for the academically underprepared student. Usually, bridge programs are conducted (for at least two weeks) during the summer prior to the fall term. It focuses on developing specific study skills and remediation of basic skills: (a) mathematics; (b) reading; and (c) writing (Garcia, 1991; Robinson, 1990).

A college orientation course for high school seniors is another type of early intervention program (usually conducted by a local college). Most of these programs have been developed to work with all academic levels of seniors in high school to assist them in making the transition to college academic life (Buchanan, 1993; Cofrancesco, Cohan, & Nelson, 1993, Fall; Warren, 1988).

Orientation and bridge programs serve a distinct purpose in assisting students with making the academic transition from high school to college. While the

cited studies have indicated positive results, the problem is that for many students these programs are not implemented early enough. The process for developing academic readiness and preparedness needs to begin by the ninth grade (Kramer & Spencer, 1989). It is difficult for high school students to have a higher level of preparedness if awareness takes place during or after the senior year.

Another way to help high school students in making the transition to college academic life is through concurrent enrollment. This allows high school students to enroll in a college course or two while still enrolled in high school. This has been a way to help high school students to think about the possibility of attending college while also allowing them to experience a gradual transition to college academic expectations (Greenberg, 1988; Cullen & Moed, 1988). Many institutions offering this program lack the support services that would be helpful in making this transition.

Concurrent enrollment is an external intervention for helping prepare high school students for college. There needs to be an improved connection between

colleges and the entire high school experience. Meister (1994) views that higher education has a responsibility not only to help enhance the preparedness and readiness of high school students for college, but also to help bring about an improvement of the learning experience while in high school. Gollattscheck (1988) states that colleges can provide leadership in the development of this form of intervention. This is a necessary role for post secondary institutions to play in the development of secondary education, although it will not be easily accomplished (Newman, 1988; Stoel, 1988).

Part of the problem with the preparedness level of students entering college is that they do not think about college while they are in the lower grades of high school. Ohio State University at Marion implemented an orientation program that begins while students are in junior high school (Hendricks, McConnell, Shade, & Hemminger, 1990, October). Saint Michael's College of Vermont and the Milwaukee school system also developed programs to help orient students toward college. These programs begin working with students in the lower high school grades. The purpose

of these programs was to: (a) raise aspiration levels toward a formal education beyond high school; (b) develop an awareness of what it takes to be prepared for college (high school course selections); and (c) develop a realistic expectation of the level of academic discipline it takes to succeed in college (readiness) (Lindau, 1993, Fall; Staff, 1993b, Fall).

Components of the LDAP design as a result of this study is supported by the literature review. Leadership literature supports the style of leadership incorporated within the LDAP. The participatory decision making process (specifically, the consultative method) as applied in the LDAP is supported by the literature review covering decision making. Applying early intervention to a prospective pool of students in order to better prepare them academically for college is supported by the recruitment and retention literature.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Methodology

Development methodology was used in the design of this LDAP. This method was chosen because a problem (raising the level of readiness and preparedness of incoming freshmen) was identified that could potentially be solved through the implementation of a properly developed LDAP. Often the purpose of a development study is to find a solution to a specific problem through the development of a product. The product can be in any of the following forms: (a) plan; (b) program; (c) process; (d) model; (e) handbook; (f) instructional unit; or (g) course (Robinson & Woolf, 1991). For this study the product was in the form of a plan.

Procedures

A general review of literature related to the research question was completed. This included a review of leadership literature as well as recruitment and retention literature.

Following the literature review, a document was created listing suggested components for the LDAP. A

generic letter was composed to provide background information and instructions for the internal validators as part of the internal validation process. The suggested components document and letter were sent to the internal validators. The internal validators were competent professionals who supervise areas at MVNC that will be directly impacted by the implementation of this LDAP. The results of the review of the suggested components document were incorporated into an initial draft of the LDAP. This draft was sent to the internal validators for additional review and suggestions. The initial draft of the LDAP was revised based upon the comments of the internal validators.

The revised draft of the LDAP was sent, along with a generic letter (similar to the one created for the internal validators) of instruction, to the external validators. The external validators were professionals who were selected for professional competence and knowledge related to key elements of the LDAP. Suggestions made by the external validators were considered for inclusion in a second revised draft of the LDAP.

The final evaluator was selected based upon expertise in the area of leadership development. The second revised draft of the LDAP along with a letter of instruction was sent to the final evaluator for review. After suggestions were received from the final evaluator, a final draft of the LDAP was developed. The director of retention and academic support services has a documented LDAP plan ready for imminent implementation.

Definition of Terms

The LDAP for this study is a personal leadership development plan for the director of retention and academic support services. The plan includes the following points: (a) challenging the process; (b) inspiring a shared vision; (c) enabling others to act; (d) modeling the way; and (e) encouraging the heart.

Preparedness is defined as successfully completing a large number of college preparatory courses. The more courses successfully completed, the higher the level of preparedness.

Readiness is defined as a proper expectation regarding the difficulty of college work. The more

accurate the expectation level regarding the difficulty of college work, the higher the level of readiness.

Assumptions

It was assumed that judgments made by the internal and external validators as well as the final evaluator were both reliable and valid with regard to key points contained in the LDAP. This study also made the assumption that an LDAP could be developed (and later implemented) which will solve the problems of preparedness and readiness of first-time freshmen.

Limitations

The validation process used by the internal and external validators as well as the final evaluator is subjective in nature. It would be difficult to replicate the same judgment from a group of similar professionals. This will result in an imperfect validation and evaluation of the LDAP.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

A Suggested Components Document for a Proposed Leadership Development Action Plan (see Appendix A) was created from the review of leadership literature and retention and recruitment literature. The review of leadership literature included: (a) management versus leadership processes; (b) strategic planning versus traditional long range planning; and (c) participatory decision making. Key points of the LDAP model (listed in the study guide of the Leadership seminar) were also reviewed: (a) challenging the process; (b) inspiring a shared vision; (c) enabling others to act; (d) modeling the way; and (e) encouraging the heart. The review of the recruitment and retention literature included: (a) decision making process for high school students regarding post secondary education; (b) recruitment approaches of admissions offices; (c) orientation programs for first-time college freshmen; (d) bridge programs; and (e) college to high school collaboration programs.

Following the review of the literature and the LDAP model as outlined in the Leadership seminar study guide

(Haugerud, Little, & Parks, 1993), a Suggested Components Document for a Proposed Leadership Development Action Plan (see Appendix A) was developed. A letter of instruction was created, explaining the expectation of internal validation (see Appendix B). The letter pointed out the following items included in the document: (a) a review of the generic purpose of using an LDAP as a problem-solving tool; (b) a summary of the literature review; and (c) an outline of appropriate problem-solving leadership applications related to cultivating the prospective pool of students into better prepared students for college. Copies of the letter and document were sent to the internal validators (see Appendix C). After the initial responses to the document were received, the LDAP was created with the following elements: (a) the suggested components; (b) the internal validators' suggestions (see Appendix D); and (c) an estimated strategic time line of activities. The LDAP document was sent to the original internal validators for review.

The external validation process was accomplished by sending a letter of instruction (similar to the one in Appendix B) explaining the external validation process

along with the LDAP document. The external validators (see Appendix C) were selected for knowledge and experience in the following areas: (a) admissions process in a small religious college setting; (b) college and high school collaborative efforts to better prepare students for the college academic experience; and (c) enhancing the freshman year with an integrated year long orientation and retention program. The suggestions from the external validators were considered for inclusion in the LDAP document (see Appendix D).

The revised LDAP document was reviewed by the final evaluator (see Appendix C) who has expertise in the leadership field. See Appendix E for the final draft of the LDAP document incorporating the results of the final evaluation. The final LDAP was made available for imminent implementation by the director of retention and academic support services.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The research question for this study was: What is an appropriate LDAP to help the director of retention and academic support services deal with the following tasks: (a) raising the academic expectation level of prospective students (readiness); and (b) orienting prospective students to enroll in the proper high school college preparatory courses (preparedness)? The final product (LDAP) was a plan designed to give direction for mobilizing key stakeholders toward these tasks.

Kotter (1990) states that leadership helps to direct and mobilize people toward a solution to a problem. The LDAP, developed as a result of this study, is designed to help give direction in solving the problem of improving the preparedness and readiness of the prospective pool of MVNC students prior to matriculation. This LDAP provides a strategic plan to mobilize stakeholders in the positive resolution of this problem.

To insure that the LDAP included the proper leadership and recruitment and retention components, internal and external experts were used to validate the design and content. The range of professional competencies allowed for the LDAP to be validated from the following viewpoints: (a) enrollment services; (b) college academics; (c) admissions; (d) college to high school collaboration; and (e) high school to college transition type programs. After the internal and external validations were completed, a final evaluator was used to review the leadership components. The suggested revisions from the validators and evaluator were considered for inclusion and a final LDAP product was developed as a solution to the research question.

Conclusions

As was expected, an LDAP was developed that will allow the director of retention and academic support services to deal constructively with the lack of readiness and preparedness of incoming first-time freshmen. This is a competent plan with regard to leadership and retention and recruitment components. MVNC has a plan of action ready for implementation.

Implications

The implementation of the LDAP will allow the director of retention and academic support services to involve a variety of stakeholders in addressing the criticisms voiced by faculty concerning the academic preparedness and readiness of incoming freshmen. The process of involving different types of stakeholders provides for a broad sharing of responsibility for developing a solution to the problem of helping MVNC prospective students attain a higher level of preparedness and readiness for college work.

The director of retention and academic support services will be viewed as a mobilizer of constituents toward a desired goal. Leadership skills can be developed by the implementation of this LDAP. This can be a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved.

Recommendations for the Improvement of Practice

MVNC should allow the director of retention and academic support services to implement this LDAP according to the estimated strategic LDAP time line listed in the LDAP document. It provides MVNC with a viable means for improving the academic progress of first-time freshmen. This will be accomplished by

various types of proactive interventions with current prospective students while they are still in high school. The LDAP calls for various stakeholders to be involved in the decision making process regarding the type of actions to be implemented. The educational process will be improved by delivering a product, in the form of a student, who is better prepared and ready to handle college level work.

A copy of the LDAP document (see Appendix E) should be distributed to the following individuals at MVNC: (a) president; (b) administrative cabinet; and (c) board of trustees. Some form of approval should be received from the president. This will allow the director of retention and academic support services to communicate the following to the top level governance and administrative stakeholders: (a) an alert regarding the current academic preparedness and readiness problem; (b) a public commitment to the LDAP (and therefore to be held accountable for its implementation); (c) indicate the need for resource allocation for the implementation of the LDAP; and (d) an estimated time line of implementation.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Suggested Components Document for a Proposed Leadership Development Action Plan

Ronald Keith Bolender

Mount Vernon Nazarene College

October 12, 1993

Mount Vernon Nazarene College (MVNC) is a young church related coeducational college of arts and sciences that is sponsored and supported by the East Central Educational Region of the Church of the Nazarene. The Church of the Nazarene sponsored the original concept of the college and continues to influence it through the election of the board of trustees. The primary support is an annual endowment provided by Nazarene churches throughout the East Central Educational Region. In addition, over 50% of the student body come from same churches.

Various studies conducted with regard to the make-up MVNC's student body indicate that one third of the students come from families who are not college educated (in some of these families the mother or father may have completed a few college courses). This ratio has been consistent since the first freshman class (1968).

A common complaint voiced by MVNC faculty is that students are not adequately prepared for college level work upon entering MVNC. It should be noted that this is not a new concern for college personnel to express. President Johnson of Kings College (Columbia) stated

the same problem existed at his prestigious institution in 1759 (Morrison, 1936).

The director of retention and academic support services interviews around seventy to eighty first-time freshmen each year. Each student is asked "How many hours did you spend each night studying for your college preparatory courses in high school during your junior and senior years?" A common response is one hour or less per weeknight. The response is similar for students of all academic levels. Many students with a respectable rank and high school grade point average (GPA) find it difficult to adjust to college academic life. For many students, the college preparatory program did not develop a realistic expectation of college work.

The average ACT Composite score has been increasing at MVNC over the last few years. There is a good balance of high ability students (ACT Composite scores of 27 and higher) and at-risk students (ACT Composite scores of less than 18). The mission of MVNC is not to become an ivy league school. At-risk students are accepted because MVNC has developed a special program to help them adjust to college life. Historically, the

Church of the Nazarene has assisted in elevating people from lower class to middle class. MVNC's enrollment policy is consistent with the historical tradition of the Church of the Nazarene. MVNC attempts to give students with various levels of academic abilities an opportunity for a college education.

This problem does create tension between faculty and the enrollment services division. Even though the ACT Composite scores have been rising, the lack of readiness and preparedness for college work has faculty accusing the enrollment services division of recruiting students who are not college material. The enrollment services division houses: (a) dean of enrollment services; (b) records and registration; (c) student financial planning; (d) admissions and student recruitment; and (e) retention and academic support services.

The annual interview of first-time freshmen reveals another interesting point. Contrary to popular belief, many high school guidance counselors do not prepare students to plan for college. Many students have never had a personal conversation with their high school counselor regarding recommended college preparatory

courses. Several of the interviewees did not know what courses to take in order to be adequately prepared for college. This, coupled with the fact that around one third of MVNC's students come from homes where parents are not college educated, indicates that many of MVNC's first-time freshmen do not have a proper expectation of the academic demands of college. It could be argued that (nationally) few first-time freshmen are ever ready for college work, but many of MVNC's students may have a lower than normal awareness of what is expected. "Too often we forget that students come to us with uninformed expectations about college learning and college life--another factor contributing to attrition" (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 68).

Leader Mission/Assignment

This leadership development action plan (LDAP) will focus on the tasks of: (a) raising the academic expectation level of prospective students (readiness); and (b) helping orient prospective students toward enrolling in college preparatory courses (preparedness). The director of retention and academic support services will be the position targeted for

leadership development through the implementation of this plan.

LDAP Goals/Outcomes

The first goal is to raise the expectation level of prospective MVNC students regarding college academics (readiness). MVNC has been using the College Student Inventory (CSI) questionnaire (Stratil, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c) since 1990. Two scales (predicted academic difficulty and study habits) on the CSI will be used to monitor the outcome of this goal. The predicted academic difficulty scale has averaged 5.05 (1 is very low, 5 is average, and 9 is very high) over the last three years for incoming freshmen. This predicts who is likely to have low grades in college. The study habits scale has averaged 48.9% (1% is very low, 99% is very high). This measures the willingness of the student to make sacrifices for academic achievement.

The second goal is to increase enrollment in college preparatory courses for prospective MVNC students (preparedness). The outcome of this goal will be measured by the number of incoming freshmen who enrolled in: (a) a college preparatory track in high school; (b) two plus college preparatory mathematics

courses; (c) two plus college preparatory science courses; and (d) two plus years of a single foreign language.

If the LDAP can improve the outcomes for one or both goals, it will be deemed a success. The extent to which the outcomes need to improve is yet undetermined. A secondary level goal for this LDAP will be to help faculty view the enrollment services division in a more favorable light. If a collaborative effort is made to improve the academic expectations of incoming freshmen, then faculty criticism of the enrollment services division may diminish. This process alone, without any significant results in the two primary goals, may improve the relationship between faculty and the enrollment services division.

LDAP Activities

Challenging the Process

To develop as a leader, one needs to challenge the process of business as usual. The criticism of faculty with regard to the enrollment services division and its recruitment of weak college students is an example of business as usual. The director of retention and academic support services needs to take a look at this

problem and see if there is positive action that can be taken to alleviate it.

Search for opportunities. Faculty's general response to a solution for this problem would be to recruit students with higher ACT Composite scores and better high school rank. The irony is that the enrollment services division has been doing just that for the last several years. Faculty say they find this hard to believe because the academic readiness and preparedness of first-time freshmen seem worse than in the past. Since MVNC is not an ivy league school and does not award full tuition scholarships, it can only attract a limited number of top ranking high school students. Cultivating MVNC's current prospective high school students into college ready students who are academically prepared students is an alternative solution.

Experiment and take risks. The LDAP will include risk taking as a result of notifying various stakeholders what MVNC is attempting to accomplish. It will take about five years to see the results. What if all that time and effort is invested and the project fails? Significant others (board of trustee,

president, and faculty) will be aware if the project fails.

Students in MVNC's prospective pool who will be eighth graders during the 1994-1995 academic year will be targeted. This group will be followed for five years. This is a long term experiment for MVNC.

Inspiring a Shared Vision

As the primary leader, the director of retention and academic support services needs to clearly define a vision of "what can be" (Haugerud, 1993). Kotter (1990) states that a leader needs to establish direction (often a vision of the distant future). For MVNC this will be a distant future project.

Envision the future. MVNC will be able to deliver prospective students who have realistic expectations of college academic work (readiness) and a higher level of enrollment in college preparatory courses (preparedness). MVNC wants to continue to maintain a balance of students with both high and low levels of natural academic ability. What MVNC wants for the future is a group of first-time freshmen who are better prepared and know that MVNC is an academic institution that expects the best from each student from day one.

A culture of readiness and preparedness will be developed (Kotter, 1990).

There will probably be at least five specific actions to be implemented during the eighth through twelfth grades. Utilizing the concepts of strategic planning and consultative participatory management (these concepts will be explained later), the nature of the five actions are currently unknown. The first action (to take place during the spring of the eighth grade) is scheduled to be a college planning brochure. The next four actions could be: (a) brochures; (b) videos; (c) letters; (d) telephone calls; (e) special study seminars conducted on campus; (f) special meetings located in population centers throughout the educational region; (g) working with high school counselors; or (h) working with the parents of the prospective students.

The enrollment services division will communicate with eighth grade prospective students during the spring of their eighth grade year. A college planing brochure will be sent. The college planing brochure (to be designed collaboratively by: (a) retention and academic support services staff; (b) enrollment

services division staff; (c) faculty; (d) current students; and (e) parents of 1994-1995 eighth grade prospective students) will help eighth graders plan their high school schedule for grades nine through twelve by listing recommended college preparatory courses. It will also focus on what academic life is like at MVNC.

Actions will be designed for the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade years focusing on what is expected academically of first-time freshmen at MVNC. The objective of this project is not to present MVNC as academically impossible to the constituents it serves, but rather to communicate the idea that college is serious business and to relay the message that college greatly enhances the future opportunities of those who graduate. The actions may include suggestions on how college study techniques can be applied to high school courses. The prospective student wins by developing into a better high school student and MVNC wins by enrolling students who are more prepared for academic life.

Enlist others. Various stakeholders will be enlisted to carry out the vision. Retention and

academic support staff, enrollment services division staff, faculty, current MVNC students, and parents of 1994-1995 eighth grade prospective students will be enlisted to develop this project and share the vision. The faculty need to see that the enrollment services division is taking a bold first step towards changing a perceived problem on campus. Communication of this vision is absolutely necessary so that all stakeholders (especially faculty) understand the real goals (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This communication is critical because some stakeholders may perceive this project as an attempt to develop MVNC into an ivy league school as opposed to modifying the behavior and course selection of current prospective students prior to their enrolling at MVNC.

Enabling Others to Act

Kotter (1990) states that leadership produces movement. Ideas for change are easily created by individuals and committees. The real challenge comes in moving forward toward implementation of those ideas. A leader is able to energize followers to take action.

Foster collaboration. Consultative participatory management will be used to develop widespread ownership

of this plan (Vroom & Jago, 1988). The various stakeholders will be called upon to consult with the director of retention and academic support services regarding suggestions for implementing the plan. Faculty and admissions staff will be called upon to suggest objectives for reaching the goals. A collaborative effort needs to be fostered in order to align stakeholder (followers) with this vision (Kotter, 1990).

Strengthen others. Gardner (1989) states that a leader needs to unlock and redirect existing motives in co-workers (followers). It is difficult to create motivation out of thin air. It is easier to find existing motivation and align it toward a vision. Since faculty have shown concern (motivation) with regard to the readiness and preparedness of incoming freshmen, redirecting this concern towards positive action will help strengthen faculty, admissions staff, and various other stakeholders. A positive outcome of good leadership is the ability to provide a vision and a means to deal with frustrating and overwhelming problems. Individuals are strengthened when they conquer problems in their professional lives because it

gives confidence to tackle other, more difficult problems.

The application of this concept will be accomplished by holding consultative sessions with the director of retention and academic support services and various stakeholders. The director of retention and academic support services will help stakeholders verbalize their concerns about the readiness and preparedness of incoming freshmen. This process will help translate their concern about this problem into motivation for dealing with this problem. Then the director of retention and academic support services will provide an overview of the general goals (vision) for solving this problem. The stakeholders will be asked to give suggestions for designing applied objectives to achieve the goals.

Modeling the Way

A leader has to model the vision. It is easy to talk about what needs to be changed and even suggest a few ways to change it, however that is what faculty have been doing in the past by complaining and then offering the suggestion that the enrollment services division attract better students. The hard part is to

develop and implement a vision (goals) that will solve the problem. People need to see someone acting out the solution. Many will follow if they have a leader modeling the way. The director of retention and academic support services will be the leader for this project and the enrollment services division will be the organizational unit of leadership.

Set the example. Kotter (1990) states that one needs to "walk the talk." In academia, committees proliferate and have a life of their own. Much is discussed yet little is accomplished through most committees and their related projects. The director of retention and academic support services will need to break this cycle by keeping the vision ever before the stakeholders. In addition the director of retention and academic support services must lead through example by overseeing the implementation of the applied objectives that are designed by the stakeholders. The director of academic support services will not be a successful leader if only the vision is shared and applied objectives are developed. Action must be taken. First, the director of retention and academic support services must lead by committing time and

resources from the retention and academic support services area. Next, the enrollment services division as a whole must devote energy towards this project. Faculty need to see the commitment of the enrollment services division with regard to this project.

Plan small wins. Since this a long term project and results will not be measurable till five years have passed, small wins need to be planned. Each stage of the project accomplished will be viewed as a small win. Each of these small wins will be communicated to the stakeholders who are aware of the project. The number of enlightened stakeholders will increase as the project evolves.

The first step will be to align the stakeholders who are a part of the retention and academic support department and the other members of the enrollment services division toward this vision. The second step is to involve faculty in a consultative meeting where views are openly expressed regarding the academic needs of first-time freshmen. This step will be considered a small win. This win will be communicated to the enrollment services division. Current students will be asked to contribute by commenting on what they wished

someone had told them about getting ready and prepared for college. This small win will be communicated to both the enrollment services division and the faculty. Selected parents of 1994-1995 eighth grade prospective students will be consulted as to what they want their offspring to know about preparing for college. This small win will be communicated to each of the other preceding groups. Each step will be viewed as a small win and will be communicated to the enlightened stakeholders.

Encouraging the Heart

Encouragement is a powerful tool for inspiring co-workers to become involved and feel a sense of ownership of the vision (goals). Long term projects require frequent sprinklings of encouragement.

Recognize individual contribution. Empowerment of individuals is one of the byproducts of good leadership (Kotter, 1990). Opportunities will be sought to publicly recognize individual stakeholders involved in this project. Recognizing individual contributions is one way to empower people through participatory consultative management. They own the plan and their ideas are heard and acted upon. This ties into the

concept of unlocking and redirecting repressed motivations.

Celebrate accomplishments. Accomplishments need to be celebrated annually when working on a long term project (Bolender, 1993). Since the results will not be measurable for five years, objectives met during the various stages of the project need to be celebrated. This will help to continually communicate the vision to various stakeholders.

The enrollment services division will celebrate each time another stage has been reached. The directors meet weekly and can be kept posted on the progress of this project. Faculty can celebrate the progress as a group during faculty institute which is held at the beginning of each academic year. The celebrations will be in the form of progress reports.

When the first group of targeted students enroll as freshmen in five years, the enrollment services division, faculty, and administrators can have a special meal to celebrate the results of the project.

Summary/Reflection

Kotter (1990) talks about thick informal networks. The implementation of this project will not follow

MVNC's standard organizational chart. The director of retention and academic support services will be blending academic and admissions personnel into a vision that is outside his/her area of direct responsibility. This project will hopefully have a positive impact on retention in about six to eight years. Changing the academic culture of first-time freshmen is the focus of the project. To implement this project in the aggressive time frame outlined in the previous section will require the use of thick informal networks with admissions staff, faculty, and current students.

A Decadal Agenda: The Strategic Planning Committee Summary Report to the Mount Vernon Nazarene College Board of Trustees (1991) states that MVNC is to assist in the improvement of study skills for high school students who are under MVNC's influence (prospective students). This assistance (via this LDAP) will be partially funded by a retention grant from The Teagle Foundation, Incorporated. The foundation instructed MVNC to strategically implement this grant. Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green (1982) state that true strategic management does not follow traditional long-range

planning formulas. It is proper to have a direction (vision or goals), but it must be loose enough to adjust to external and internal environmental changes. This LDAP gives direction. Through consultative participatory management this project will make any adjustments necessary to achieve the desired goals (vision).

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APPENDIX B

Suggested Components Document Letter

Ronald Bolender
Director of Retention and Academic Support Services

October 12, 1993

E. LeBron Fairbanks, D.Min.
President

Dear Dr. Fairbanks:

I am working on a practicum project for Nova University in the area of leadership development. The focus of this project is to create a Leadership Development Action Plan (LDAP) to deal with the problems of underprepared and unenlightened first-time freshmen entering MVNC. Underprepared students will be defined as not enrolling in the proper college preparatory courses in high school. Unenlightened students will be defined as students who do not have the proper expectations regarding the level of work required to succeed in college.

I have enclosed a Suggested Components Document of a proposed LDAP for dealing with these two problems. The focus of an LDAP is to develop leadership strategies--not a complete "nuts and bolts" outline of the enacted plan. Please review the enclosed document for three things: (a) the generic purpose of an LDAP as a problem-solving tool; (b) leadership literature; and (c) outlining appropriate problem-solving leadership applications related to the two problems listed above.

If you have any question please call me at 4532. After you have reviewed the document, please respond to the following questions (feel free to write your responses on the Suggested Components Document):

(a) Are these problems worthy of attempted solutions that will use time and financial resources?

(b) What suggestions would you make in regard to the various components of the Suggested Components Document (such as "inspiring a shared vision," "enabling others to act," "modeling the way," "encouraging the heart," and "celebrating accomplishments")? Do you have any suggestions of what ought to be included under any of the listed components?

(c) Do you have any general suggestions regarding the development of this LDAP?

I would appreciate the return of the Suggested Components Document and comments by October 20, 1993. You will receive a draft of the LDAP by October 28, 1993.

Sincerely,

Ronald Bolender

APPENDIX C

Internal and External Validators and Final Evaluator

Internal Validators

E. LeBron Fairbanks, D. Min.
President
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APPENDIX D

Suggested LDAP Revisions

Internal Validators

"Work on the communication problems between enrollment services division and faculty. Faculty need to understand the problems with recruiting only the top academic prospects."

"Clarify if the interviews conducted by the director of retention and academic support services is for all levels of students or just the underprepared and at-risk students."

"Is there a way to measure the reduction of faculty criticism of the enrollment services division regarding the type of students that are recruited?"

"Clarify what levels of preparedness and readiness ought to be achieved in order to consider the implementation of the LDAP as successful."

"For clarification, list the eighth grade prospective pool for the 1994-1995 academic year as the experimental group."

"Under Enlist others, a point should be made that all stakeholders involved in the LDAP process (especially faculty) will have a sense of responsibility for the desired outcomes."

"Disagree with the assumption that little is usually accomplished through the committee process."

"Under Plan small wins, this should be defined by reaching short term reachable objectives."

"Under Celebrate accomplishments, refreshments should be included as part of the celebrations with faculty during faculty institute."

External Validators

"What position is the LDAP targeted for leadership development?"

"Academic summer camps for high school students would be a good option for a possible activity listed under Envision the future."

"I think you have to have very reasonable goals about the extent to which administrators responsible for enrollment management will ever be able to put themselves above what you call 'faculty criticism of the enrollment services division.' I have never met a college faculty that didn't bash and trash the admissions officers and hold them responsible for the perceived deficiencies of the latest freshman class. This is, of course, patently absurd given the fact that student characteristics are the result of the enormous interplay of many cultural and historical forces. In addition, in non selective institutions such as yours when the faculty criticize the admissions pool, they frequently deny the realities of the demographic characteristics in the applicant pool, particularly in the rust belt part of the country where you come from where the pool of traditional age high school graduates has been declining, and is just now beginning to level off and slowly increase. I think that your project is much more realistic in its aspirations to increase the preparation level of your entering students. But whether or not that will be sufficient to allay faculty criticism is another matter. I suspect that by their very nature, many college faculty will never be adequately satisfied with the quality of entering students. As you yourself note, this has been a pervasive part of the high education culture in America since Harvard first opened its doors in the 1630's!"

"Consider involving high school guidance counselors in the process. They can explain their frustrations with dealing with students in preparing them for college. Realize that the high school guidance counselors to high student ratio can be as high as 400 to 1. They need to feel supported, not excluded."

"How will you know that these eighth graders listed in MVNC's prospective pool are prospective MVNC students?"

"How will public high school personnel be involved in this project?"

"Is this a research project from which you wish to draw conclusions and make generalizations based upon results, or is this simply an action plan which will be reviewed subjectively? If it is the latter, then your have a good plan. If it is the former, then you need to review your methodology . . ."

Final Evaluator

"I'm not sure you will be able to modify a traditional complaint about the quality of applicants."

"The church component of recruitment and information sharing seems to be missing."

"What about the high school guidance counselors of high schools where most of the MVNC students graduated?"

"Faculty should define what the academic problems are for freshmen."

APPENDIX E

Leadership Development Action Plan

Ronald Keith Bolender

Mount Vernon Nazarene College

Mount Vernon Nazarene College (MVNC) is a young church related coeducational college of arts and sciences that is sponsored and supported by the East Central Educational Region of the Church of the Nazarene. The Church of the Nazarene sponsored the original concept of the college and continues to influence it through the election of the board of trustees. The primary support is an annual endowment-type gift provided by Nazarene churches throughout the East Central Educational Region. In addition, over 50% of the student body come from the sponsoring denomination.

Various studies conducted with regard to the make-up MVNC's student body (such as the College Student Inventory) indicate that one third of the students come from families who are not college educated (in some of these families the mother or father may have completed a few college courses). This ratio has been consistent since the first freshman class (1968).

A common complaint voiced by MVNC faculty is that students are not adequately prepared for college level work upon entering MVNC. It should be noted that this is not a new concern for college personnel to express.

President Johnson of Kings College (Columbia) stated the same problem existed at his prestigious institution in 1759 (Morrison, 1936).

The director of retention and academic support services interviews around 70 to 80 first-time freshmen each year. These students cover the span of high to low ACT Composite scores and are from both college preparatory and vocational high school tracks. Each student is asked "How many hours did you spend each afternoon or night studying for your college preparatory courses in high school during your junior and senior years?" A common response is one hour or less per weeknight. The response is similar for students of all academic levels. Many students with a respectable rank and high school grade point average (GPA) find it difficult to adjust to college academic life. For many students, the college preparatory program did not develop a realistic expectation of college work.

The average American College Test (ACT) Composite score has been increasing at MVNC for the last few years. Students enrolled at MVNC represent a good balance of the following: (a) high ability students

(ACT Composite scores of 27 and better); (b) average ability students (ACT Composite scores between 19 through 26); and (c) at-risk students (ACT Composite scores of less than 18). The mission of MVNC is not to become an ivy league school. At-risk students are accepted because MVNC has developed a special program to help them adjust to college life. Historically, the Church of the Nazarene has assisted in elevating people from lower class to middle class. MVNC's enrollment policy is consistent with the historical tradition of the Church of the Nazarene. MVNC attempts to give students with various levels of academic abilities an opportunity for a college education.

Faculty's complaint about the academic quality of entering freshmen tends to create tension between faculty and the enrollment services division. Even though the ACT Composite scores have been rising, the lack of readiness and preparedness for college work has faculty accusing the enrollment services division of recruiting students who are not college material. The enrollment services division houses: (a) dean of enrollment services; (b) records and registration; (c) student financial planning; (d) admissions and student

recruitment; and (e) retention and academic support services.

The interviews of first-time freshmen conducted by the director of retention and academic support service reveals that many high school guidance counselors do not provide assistance to students in planning for college. Many students have never had a personal conversation with their high school guidance counselor regarding recommended college preparatory courses. Several of the interviewees did not know what courses to take in order to be adequately prepared for college. This, coupled with the fact that around one third of MVNC's students come from homes where parents are not college educated, indicates that many of MVNC's first-time freshmen do not have a proper expectation of the academic demands of college. It could be argued that (nationally) few first-time freshmen are ever ready for college work, but many of MVNC's students may have a lower than normal awareness of what is expected. "Too often we forget that students come to us with uninformed expectations about college learning and college life--another factor contributing to attrition" (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 68).

Leader Mission/Assignment

This leadership development action plan (LDAP) will focus on the tasks of: (a) raising the academic expectation level of prospective students (readiness); and (b) helping orient prospective students toward the need for enrolling in college preparatory courses (preparedness). The director of retention and academic support services will be the position targeted for leadership development through the implementation of this plan.

LDAP Goals/Outcomes

The first goal is to raise the expectation level of prospective MVNC students regarding college academics (readiness). MVNC has been using the College Student Inventory (CSI) questionnaire (Stratil, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c) since 1990. Two scales (predicted academic difficulty and study habits) on the CSI will be used to monitor the outcome of this goal. Incoming MVNC freshmen have averaged 5.05 on the predicted academic difficulty scale (1 is very low, 5 is average, and 9 is very high) over the last three years. This predicts who is likely to have low grades in college. MVNC freshmen have also averaged 48.9% on the study habits

scale (1% is very low, 99% is very high). This measures the willingness of the student to make sacrifices for academic achievement. While both of these scores are in the average national range for college students taking the CSI, this does not mean that these are desirable scores for incoming freshmen to succeed at MVNC (at least according to academic concerns raised by faculty).

The second goal is to increase enrollment in college preparatory courses for prospective MVNC students (preparedness). The outcome of this goal will be measured by the number of incoming freshmen who enrolled in: (a) a college preparatory track in high school; (b) two plus college preparatory mathematics courses; (c) two plus college preparatory science courses; and (d) two plus years of a single foreign language.

The implementation of the LDAP will be deemed a success if the following results are realized: (a) an increase in the predicted academic difficulty scale; (b) an increase in the study habits scale; and (c) an increased enrollment of high school college preparatory courses. The first-time freshmen entering MVNC during

the 1993 Fall semester will be the control group and the first-time freshmen entering MVNC during the 1999 Fall semester will be the experimental group. These three elements will be framed in three evaluative research questions looking for significant differences between the control and experimental groups.

A secondary level goal for this LDAP will be to help faculty view the enrollment services division in a more favorable light. If a collaborative effort is made to improve the academic expectations of incoming freshmen, then faculty criticism of the enrollment services division may diminish. This process alone, without any significant results in the two primary goals, may improve the relationship between faculty and the enrollment services division.

To measure the outcome of the secondary level goal, a survey will be developed and implemented by the director of institutional research. The survey will attempt to compare the attitude of the 1993 Fall semester faculty with the 1999 Fall semester faculty toward the enrollment services division in relation to its efforts to recruit college prepared first-time freshmen.

LDAP Activities

Challenging the Process

One way to develop as a leader is to challenge and change the business as usual mind set. The criticism of faculty with regard to the enrollment services division and its recruitment of weak college students is an example of business as usual. The director of retention and academic support services needs to take a look at this problem and see if there is positive action that can be taken to alleviate it.

Search for opportunities. Faculty's general response to a solution for this problem would be to recruit students with higher ACT Composite scores and better high school rank. The irony is that the enrollment services division has been doing just that for the last several years. Faculty say they find this hard to believe because the academic readiness and preparedness of first-time freshmen seem worse than in the past. (It is possible that faculty expectations rise as student characteristics change upward.) Since MVNC is not an ivy league school and does not award full tuition scholarships, it can only attract a limited number of top ranking high school students.

Cultivating MVNC's current prospective high school students into college ready students who are academically prepared students is an alternative solution.

Experiment and take risks. The LDAP will include risk taking as a result of notifying various stakeholders what MVNC is attempting to accomplish. It will take about five years to see the results. What if all that time and effort is invested and the project fails? Significant others (board of trustees, president, and faculty) will be aware if the project fails.

Students in MVNC's prospective pool who will be eighth graders during the 1994-1995 academic year will be targeted (this will be the experimental group). MVNC has around 20% of its total senior year prospective recruiting pool in place by the end of the eighth grade year. Since a majority of MVNC's student body is from Nazarene churches located in the East Central Education Region, this allows for early acquisition of prospective students' names. This group will be followed for five years. This is a long term experiment for MVNC.

Inspiring a Shared Vision

As the primary leader, the director of retention and academic support services needs to clearly define a vision of what can be (Haugerud, 1993). Kotter (1990) states that a leader needs to establish direction (often a vision of the distant future). For MVNC this will be a distant future project.

Envision the future. MVNC will be able to deliver prospective students who have realistic expectations of college academic work (readiness) and a higher level of enrollment in college preparatory courses (preparedness). It is within MVNC's mission to continue to maintain a balance of students with both high and low levels of natural academic ability. What MVNC wants for the future is a group of first-time freshmen who are better prepared and know that MVNC is an academic institution that expects the best from each student from day one. A culture of readiness and preparedness will be developed (Kotter, 1990).

There will probably be at least five specific actions to be implemented during the eighth through twelfth grades. Utilizing the concepts of strategic planning and the consultative decision making method of

participatory management (these concepts will be explained later), the nature of the five actions is currently unknown. The first action (to take place during the spring of the eighth grade) is scheduled to be a college planning brochure. The next four actions could be any of the following: (a) brochures; (b) videos; (c) letters; (d) telephone calls; (e) special study seminars conducted on campus; (f) special meetings located in population centers throughout the educational region; (g) working with high school counselors; (h) working with the parents of the prospective students; (i) special academic summer camps held on the MVNC campus for high school students; or (j) developing special academic outreach programs in the local Nazarene churches.

The enrollment services division will communicate with eighth grade prospective students during the spring of their eighth grade year. A college planning brochure will be sent. The college planning brochure will be designed by the following stakeholders using the consultative decision making method of participatory management: (a) retention and academic support services staff; (b) enrollment services

division staff; (c) faculty; (d) current students; (e) high school guidance counselors; (f) pastors and laypersons; and (g) parents of 1994-1995 eighth grade prospective students) will help eighth graders plan their high school schedule for grades 9 through 12 by listing recommended college preparatory courses. It will also focus on what academic life is like at MVNC.

Actions will be designed for the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade years focusing on what is expected academically of first-time freshmen at MVNC. The objective of this project is not to present MVNC as academically impossible to the constituents it serves, but rather to communicate the idea that college is serious business and to relay the message that college greatly enhances the future opportunities of those who graduate. The actions may include suggestions on how college study techniques can be applied to high school courses. The prospective student wins by developing into a better high school student and MVNC wins by enrolling students who are more prepared for academic life.

Enlist others. Various stakeholders will be enlisted to carry out the vision (goals). Retention

and academic support staff, enrollment services division staff, faculty, current MVNC students, high school guidance counselors, pastors and laypersons, and parents of 1994-1995 eighth grade prospective students will be enlisted to develop this project and share the vision (goals). They will also share personal responsibility for the outcomes of the implemented vision (goals). The faculty need to see that the enrollment services division is taking a bold first step towards changing a perceived problem on campus. Communication of this vision is absolutely necessary so that all stakeholders (especially faculty) understand the real goals (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This communication is critical because some stakeholders may perceive this project as an attempt to develop MVNC into an ivy league school as opposed to modifying the behavior and course selection of current prospective students prior to their enrolling at MVNC.

Enabling Others to Act

Kotter (1990) states that leadership produces movement. Ideas for change are easily created by individuals and committees. The real challenge comes

in moving forward toward implementation of those ideas. A leader is able to energize followers to take action.

Foster collaboration. The consultative decision making method of participatory management will be used to develop widespread ownership of this plan (Vroom & Jago, 1988). The various stakeholders will be called upon to consult with the director of retention and academic support services (who makes the final decisions) regarding suggestions for implementing the plan. Faculty, enrollment services staff, current students, high school guidance counselors, and parents of the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders will be called upon to suggest objectives for reaching the goals. A collaborative effort needs to be fostered in order to align stakeholders (followers) with this vision (Kotter, 1990).

Strengthen others. Passive criticism can be unproductive and even destructive in working with fellow professionals. Changing passive criticism toward proactive actions can strengthen the professional environment. Gardner (1989) states that a leader needs to unlock and redirect existing motives in co-workers (followers). It is difficult to create

motivation out of thin air. It is easier to find existing motivation and align it toward a vision. Since faculty have shown concern (motivation) with regard to the readiness and preparedness of incoming freshmen, redirecting this concern toward positive action (as opposed to passive criticism) will help strengthen the ability of faculty (as well as the enrollment services division staff) toward proactively responding to future professional problems.

A positive outcome of good leadership is the ability to provide a vision and a means to deal with frustrating and overwhelming problems. Individuals are strengthened when they conquer problems in their professional lives because it gives confidence to tackle other, more difficult problems.

The application of this concept will be accomplished by holding consultative sessions with the director of retention and academic support services and various stakeholders. The director of retention and academic support services will help stakeholders verbalize their concerns about the readiness and preparedness of incoming freshmen. This process will help translate their concern about this problem into

motivation for dealing with this problem. Then the director of retention and academic support services will provide an overview of the general goals (vision) for solving this problem. The stakeholders will be asked to give suggestions for designing applied objectives to achieve the goals.

Modeling the Way

A leader has to model the vision. It is easy to talk about what needs to be changed and even suggest a few ways to change it, however that is what faculty have been doing in the past by complaining and then offering the suggestion that the enrollment services division attract better students. The hard part is to develop and implement a vision (goals) that will solve the problem. People need to see someone acting out the solution. Many will follow if they have a leader modeling the way. The director of retention and academic support services will be the leader for this project and the enrollment services division will be the organizational unit of leadership.

Set the example. Kotter (1990) states that one needs to walk the talk. In academia, committees proliferate and have a life of their own. The typical

committee model is a rather inefficient (yet democratic) system of managing special projects or concerns. Many ideas are generated but sometimes proceeding actions do not match the suggested actions of the committee.

The director of retention and academic support services will need to break this cycle by keeping the vision ever before the stakeholders. In addition the director of retention and academic support services must lead through example by overseeing the implementation of the applied objectives that are designed by the stakeholders. The director of academic support services will not be a successful leader if only the vision is shared and applied objectives are developed. Action must be taken. This is the reason for using the consultative decision making method of participatory management. Ideas and ownership need to be fostered by allowing organized groups of stakeholders to participate in the problem solving process. The rationale for using the consultative rather than group decision making method is that committee decisions and actions (in the academic world) usually take too long.

To set the example of commitment and action, the director of retention and academic support services must first lead by committing time and resources from the retention and academic support services area. Next, the enrollment services division as a whole must devote energy towards this project. Faculty need to see the commitment of the enrollment services division with regard to this project.

Plan small wins. Since this a long term project and results will not be measurable till five years have past, small wins need to be planned. This can be executed by scheduling short-term objectives. Each stage of the project accomplished will be viewed as a small win. Each of these small wins will be communicated to the stakeholders who are aware of the project. The number of enlightened stakeholders will increase as the project evolves.

The first step will be to align the stakeholders who are a part of the retention and academic support department and the other members of the enrollment services division toward this vision. The second step is to involve faculty in a consultative meeting where views are openly expressed regarding specific academic

needs of first-time freshmen. Faculty need to specifically define freshmen academic problems. This step will be considered a small win. This win will be communicated to the enrollment services division. Current students will be asked to contribute by commenting on what they wished someone had told them about getting ready and prepared for college. This small win will be communicated to both the enrollment services division and the faculty. High school guidance counselors will be asked to share ideas on how to persuade eighth graders to select the college preparatory track beginning with ninth grade courses. This small win will be communicated to each of the other preceding groups. Pastors and laypersons will be asked to share how the local church can help support academic preparation among their youth. This small win will be communicated to each of the other preceding groups. Selected parents of 1994-1995 eighth grade prospective students will be consulted as to what they want their offspring to know about preparing for college. This small win will be communicated to each of the other preceding groups. Each step will be

viewed as a small win and will be communicated to the enlightened stakeholders.

Encouraging the Heart

Encouragement is a powerful tool for inspiring co-workers to become involved and feel a sense of ownership of the vision (goals). Long term projects require frequent sprinklings of encouragement.

Recognize individual contribution. Empowerment of individuals is one of the byproducts of good leadership (Kotter, 1990). Empowerment implies authority to make decisions that affect outcomes. Opportunities will be sought to publicly recognize individual stakeholders involved in this project. Recognizing individual contributions is one way to empower people through participatory consultative management. They own the plan and their ideas are heard and acted upon. This ties into the concept of unlocking and redirecting repressed motivations.

Celebrate accomplishments. Accomplishments need to be celebrated at least annually when working on a long term project (Bolender, 1993). Since the results will not be measurable for five years, objectives met during the various stages of the project need to be

celebrated. This will help to continually communicate the vision to various stakeholders.

The enrollment services division will celebrate each time another stage has been reached. The directors meet weekly and can be kept posted on the progress of this project. Faculty can celebrate the progress as a group during faculty institute which is held at the beginning of each academic year. The celebrations will be in the form of progress reports (along with appropriate refreshments).

When the first group of targeted students enroll as freshmen in five years, the enrollment services division, faculty, and administrators can have a special meal to celebrate the results of the project.

Estimated Strategic LDAP Time Line

April 1994 - The director of institutional research will develop a survey to measure the attitude of faculty toward the enrollment services division in relation to its efforts to recruit college prepared first-time freshmen.

May 1994 - The director of institutional research will give the faculty attitude survey to the full time

and part time faculty members who were teaching during the 1993 Fall semester at MVNC.

May 1994 - The director of retention and academic support services will collect the following data from first-time freshmen who enrolled at MVNC during the 1993 Fall semester: (a) CSI results of the predicted academic difficulty and study habits scores; and (b) years of college preparatory courses listed on high school transcripts.

October 1994 - The staff of the retention and academic support services will be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five). The first action (a college planning brochure) will be the immediate focus. Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme for this project.

November 1994 - The members of the enrollment services division will be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five) and will be updated on the outcome of the retention and academic support services staff meeting. The first action (a college planning brochure) will be the immediate focus. Enrollment

services division needs to select: (a) a consultative group of faculty members; (b) a consultative group of current MVNC students; (c) a consultative group of high school guidance counselors (target high schools that have graduates attending MVNC); (d) a consultative group of pastors and laypersons; and (e) a consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders). Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme for this project.

November 1994 - The selected consultative group of faculty members needs to be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five) and updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met. The first action (a college planning brochure) will be the immediate focus. Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme for this project.

November 1994 - The selected consultative group of current MVNC students needs to be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five) and updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met. The first action (a college planning brochure) will be

the immediate focus. Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme of this project.

November 1994 - The selected consultative group of high school guidance counselors needs to be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five) and updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met. The first action (a college planning brochure) will be the immediate focus. Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme of this project.

November 1994 - The selected consultative group of pastors and laypersons needs to be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five) and updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met. The first action (a college planning brochure) will be the immediate focus. Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme of this project.

November 1994 - The selected consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders) needs to be enlightened and consulted regarding the design and implementation of this project (actions one through five) and updated on the outcome

of the other consultative groups who have met. The first action (a college planning brochure) will be the immediate focus. Another item of discussion will be the recommended theme of this project.

December 1994 - A college planning brochure (dealing with academic preparedness) will be developed using the information collected from the five consulting groups. The director of retention and academic support services and selected members of the enrollment services division will work with a marketing firm to design the layout of this piece so that it will match other recruitment literature. The recommended themes will be narrowed down to one.

March 1995 - The college planning brochure will be printed and mailed. The ideal time for this mailing will be in mid-spring of the eighth grade due to the eighth graders' scheduling of high school courses.

April 1995 - A letter of appreciation with a copy of the college planning brochure, will be sent to all stakeholders involved in the consultative groups. This will be a form of a "small win" celebration.

August 1995 - There will be a "small win" celebration at faculty institute for the 1995-1996

academic year. A kickoff presentation will be made to faculty regarding the college planning brochure. The enrollment services division will be present to "join hands" with faculty committing to improve the readiness and preparedness of prospective students enrolling at MVNC.

October 1995 - The staff of the retention and academic support services will begin work on action two. This action (aimed at ninth graders) will deal with the readiness or preparedness issues. At this point, the type of action is not yet known.

November 1995 - The members of the enrollment services division will begin work on action two and will be updated on the outcome of the retention and academic support services staff meeting. Enrollment services division needs to select: (a) a consultative group of faculty members; (b) a consultative group of current MVNC students; and (c) a consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders).

November 1995 - The selected consultative group of faculty members will begin work on action two and will

be updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1995 - The selected consultative group of current MVNC students will begin work on action two and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1995 - The selected consultative group of high school guidance counselors will begin work on action two and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1995 - The selected consultative group of pastors and laypersons will begin work on action two and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1995 - The selected consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders) will begin work on action two and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

December 1995 - Action two will be developed using the information collected from the five consulting groups. The director of retention and academic support services and selected members of the enrollment

services division will work together to complete action two.

February 1996 - Action two as a product or procedure will be either distributed or implemented.

April 1996 - A letter of appreciation with a copy or description of the final action two product, will be sent to all stakeholders involved in the consultative groups. This will be a form of a "small win" celebration.

August 1996 - There will be a "small win" celebration at faculty institute for the 1996-1997 academic year. The staff from enrollment services division will be present to "join hands" with faculty celebrating action two.

October 1996 - The staff of the retention and academic support services will begin work on action three. This action (aimed at tenth graders) will deal with the readiness or preparedness issues. At this point, the type of action is not yet known.

November 1996 - The members of the enrollment services division will begin work on action three and will be updated on the outcome of the retention and academic support services staff meeting. Enrollment

services division needs to select: (a) a consultative group of faculty members; (b) a consultative group of current MVNC students; and (c) a consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders).

November 1996 - The selected consultative group of faculty members will begin work on action three and will be updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1996 - The selected consultative group of current MVNC students will begin work on action three and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1996 - The selected consultative group of high school guidance counselors will begin work on action three and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1996 - The selected consultative group of pastors and laypersons will begin work on action three and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1996 - The selected consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective

eighth graders) will begin work on action three and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

December 1996 - Action two will be developed using the information collected from the five consulting groups. The director of retention and academic support services and selected members of the enrollment services division will work together to complete action three.

February 1997 - Action three as a product or procedure will be either distributed or implemented.

April 1997 - A letter of appreciation with a copy or description of the final action three product, will be sent to all stakeholders involved in the consultative groups. This will be a form of a "small win" celebration.

August 1997 - There will be a "small win" celebration at faculty institute for the 1997-1998 academic year. The staff from enrollment services division will be present to "join hands" with faculty celebrating action three.

October 1997 - The staff of the retention and academic support services will begin work on action

four. This action (aimed at eleventh graders) will deal with the readiness or preparedness issues. At this point, the type of action is not yet known.

November 1997 - The members of the enrollment services division will begin work on action four and will be updated on the outcome of the retention and academic support services staff meeting. Enrollment services division needs to select: (a) a consultative group of faculty members; (b) a consultative group of current MVNC students; and (c) a consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders).

November 1997 - The selected consultative group of faculty members will begin work on action four and will be updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1997 - The selected consultative group of current MVNC students will begin work on action four and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1997 - The selected consultative group of high school guidance counselors will begin work on

action four and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1997 - The selected consultative group of pastors and laypersons will begin work on action four and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1997 - The selected consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders) will begin work on action four and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

December 1997 - Action two will be developed using the information collected from the five consulting groups. The director of retention and academic support services and selected members of the enrollment services division will work together to complete action four.

February 1998 - Action four as a product or procedure will be either distributed or implemented.

April 1998 - A letter of appreciation with a copy or description of the final action four product, will be sent to all stakeholders involved in the

consultative groups. This will be a form of a "small win" celebration.

August 1998 - There will be a "small win" celebration at faculty institute for the 1998-1999 academic year. The staff from enrollment services division will be present to "join hands" with faculty celebrating action four.

October 1998 - The staff of the retention and academic support services will begin work on action five. This action (aimed at twelfth graders) will deal with the readiness or preparedness issues. At this point, the type of action is not yet known.

November 1998 - The members of the enrollment services division will begin work on action five and will be updated on the outcome of the retention and academic support services staff meeting. Enrollment services division needs to select: (a) a consultative group of faculty members; (b) a consultative group of current MVNC students; and (c) a consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders).

November 1998 - The selected consultative group of faculty members will begin work on action five and will

be updated on the outcome of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1998 - The selected consultative group of current MVNC students will begin work on action five and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1998 - The selected consultative group of high school guidance counselors will begin work on action five and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1998 - The selected consultative group of pastors and laypersons will begin work on action five and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

November 1998 - The selected consultative group of parents (from the 1994-1995 pool of MVNC prospective eighth graders) will begin work on action five and will be updated on the outcomes of the consultative groups who have met.

December 1998 - Action two will be developed using the information collected from the five consulting groups. The director of retention and academic support services and selected members of the enrollment

services division will work together to complete action five.

February 1999 - Action five as a product or procedure will be either distributed or implemented.

April 1999 - A letter of appreciation with a copy or description of the final action five product, will be sent to all stakeholders involved in the consultative groups. This will be a form of a "small win" celebration.

August 1999 - There will be a "small win" celebration at faculty institute for the 1998-1999 academic year. The staff from enrollment services division will be present to "join hands" with faculty celebrating action five.

October 1999 - The first measurable results of the project will be available. Both goals will be able to be objectively measured by evaluating the CSI outcomes and high school transcripts of current freshmen at MVNC. This data will be compared to the data collected from first-time freshmen who enrolled at MVNC during the 1993 Fall semester. A study will be conducted to see if there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups. A celebration will be

planned for enrollment services division and all the consultative groups. The results will be presented in a faculty meeting during this month.

October 1999 - The director of institutional research will give the faculty attitude survey to the full time and part time faculty members who are teaching during the 1999 Fall semester at MVNC. The results of the 1993 Fall semester and 1994 Fall semester surveys will be evaluated.

October 1999 - A combined meeting consisting of the: (a) dean of enrollment services; (b) director of retention and academic support services; (c) director of admissions and student recruitment; (d) vice president for academic affairs; and (e) president will review the objective results and make any suggested revisions regarding the continuation of the project.

Summary/Reflection

Kotter (1990) talks about thick informal networks. The implementation of this project will not follow MVNC's standard organizational chart. The director of retention and academic support services will be blending academic and enrollment services personnel into a vision that is outside his/her area of direct

responsibility. This project will hopefully have a positive impact on retention in about six to eight years. Changing the academic culture of first-time freshmen is the focus of the project. To implement this project in the aggressive time frame outlined in the previous section will require the use of thick informal networks with enrollment services staff, faculty, and current students.

A Decadal Agenda: The Strategic Planning Committee Summary Report to the Mount Vernon Nazarene College Board of Trustees (1991) states that MVNC is to assist in the improvement of study skills for high school students who are under MVNC's influence (prospective students). This assistance (via this LDAP) will be partially funded by a retention grant from The Teagle Foundation, Incorporated. The foundation instructed MVNC to strategically implement this grant. Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green (1982) state that true strategic management does not follow traditional long-range planning formulas. It is proper to have a direction (vision or goals), but it must be loose enough to adjust to external and internal environmental changes. This LDAP gives direction. Through the consultative

decision making method of participatory management this project will make any adjustments necessary to achieve the desired goals (vision).

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